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The President's Daily Brief

21 March 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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LATE ITEM

Libya-US: Early this morning two Libyan Air Force Mirage fighters fired on a US C-130 military transport aircraft performing a reconnaissance mission over the Mediterranean.

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The C-130 has returned safely to its base in Greece.

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

21 March 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

There is continuing disagreement within the West German Government on whether German forces should be included in the first phase of mutual force reductions. *(Page 1)*

Sharp fighting continues in certain areas of South Vietnam. *(Page 2)* 25X1

Egypt [redacted] Libya [redacted] 25X1
(Page 3)

The USSR is letting Jews emigrate without paying the education tax. *(Page 4)* 25X1

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WEST GERMANY - MBFR

There is continuing disagreement within the West German Government on whether German forces should be included in the initial phase of mutual force reductions. In a recent talk with the US ambassador, Defense Minister Leber expressed strong opposition to any plan to limit reductions to foreign forces stationed in central Europe. Leber contended that this kind of agreement would generate inexorable pressure in the FRG for a unilateral cutback in West German forces.

Bonn's Disarmament Commissioner Roth and other Foreign Office officials continue to advocate that initial troop reductions involve only "stationed" forces. They also stress, however, that an agreement providing for mutual constraints on reinforcement, movement, and exercises, concluded before one on reductions, would buttress their case. Roth arrives today in Washington, and will seek US support for the Foreign Office position.

The formal NATO position is that reductions of both stationed and indigenous forces should be carried out in an integrated program, but that reductions of stationed forces would be considered first.

* * *

The MBFR talks in Vienna remain at square one. Continuing disagreement on the question of Hungarian participation has blocked plenary meetings. The first and only one was held on 31 January.

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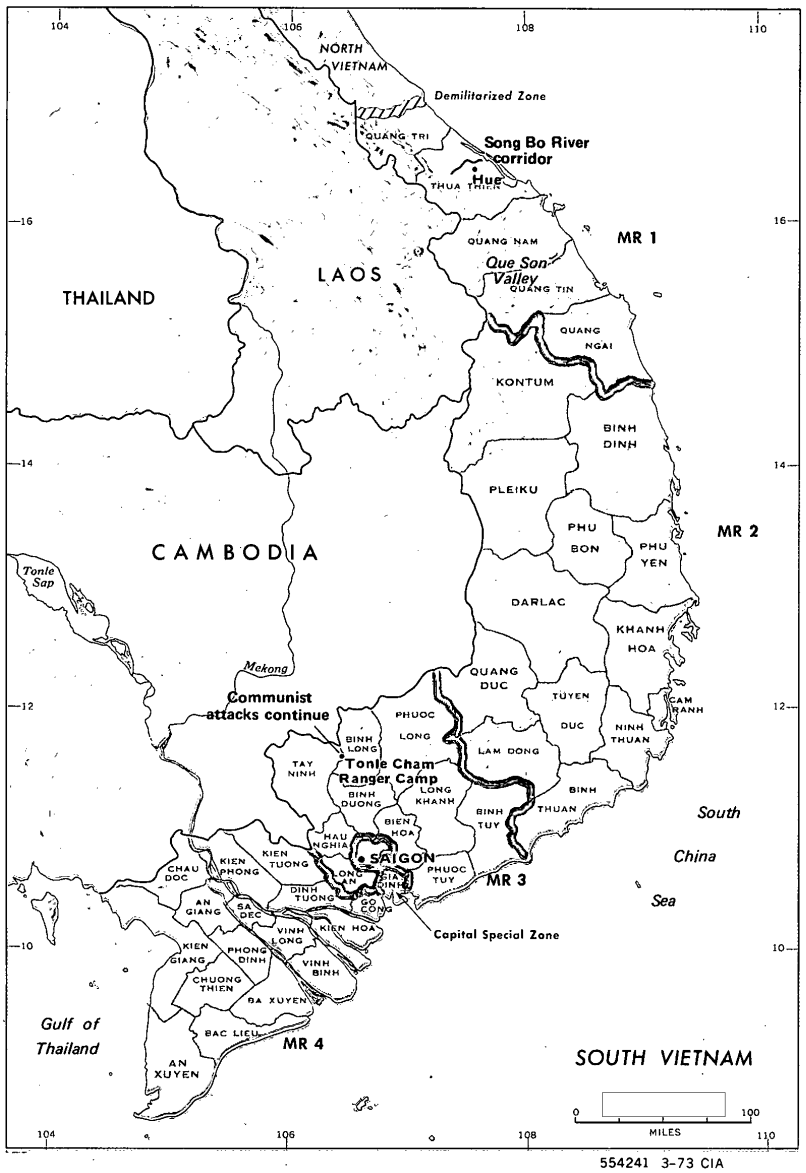

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The Communists continue to direct heavy artillery and mortar fire against the Tonle Cham Ranger Camp northwest of Saigon. The attacks reportedly have destroyed the camp's ammunition supply, and heavy antiaircraft fire has prevented aerial resupply for the past two weeks. The Communists reportedly have dug trenches to within 1,000 meters of the camp's perimeter. The Communist delegates on the Four Power Joint Military Commission have refused to allow the ICCS truce teams to make an on-site investigation.

> *The Tonle Cham Camp is the government's northernmost listening post on the Saigon River infiltration corridor. The Communists may hope that continuing pressure will force the government to abandon the position, thereby facilitating their supply and troop movements closer to Saigon.*

In the northern provinces, there is sharp fighting west of Hue along the Song Bo River supply corridor and around several government fire support bases. Moderate fighting is reported in the Que Son Valley. Prisoners claim that the Communists have reinforced their units in this area with armor.

* * *

Saigon released today a formal indictment of Communist violations of the Paris agreement. A Foreign Ministry statement charged that barely a month after the Paris accords the North Vietnamese had sent south 50,000 troops, 300 tanks, and hundreds of artillery pieces, and that most of these troops and weapons have already reached South Vietnam. The statement added that Saigon "reserves the right to appropriate reaction" to defend South Vietnamese territory.

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LIBYA-EGYPT

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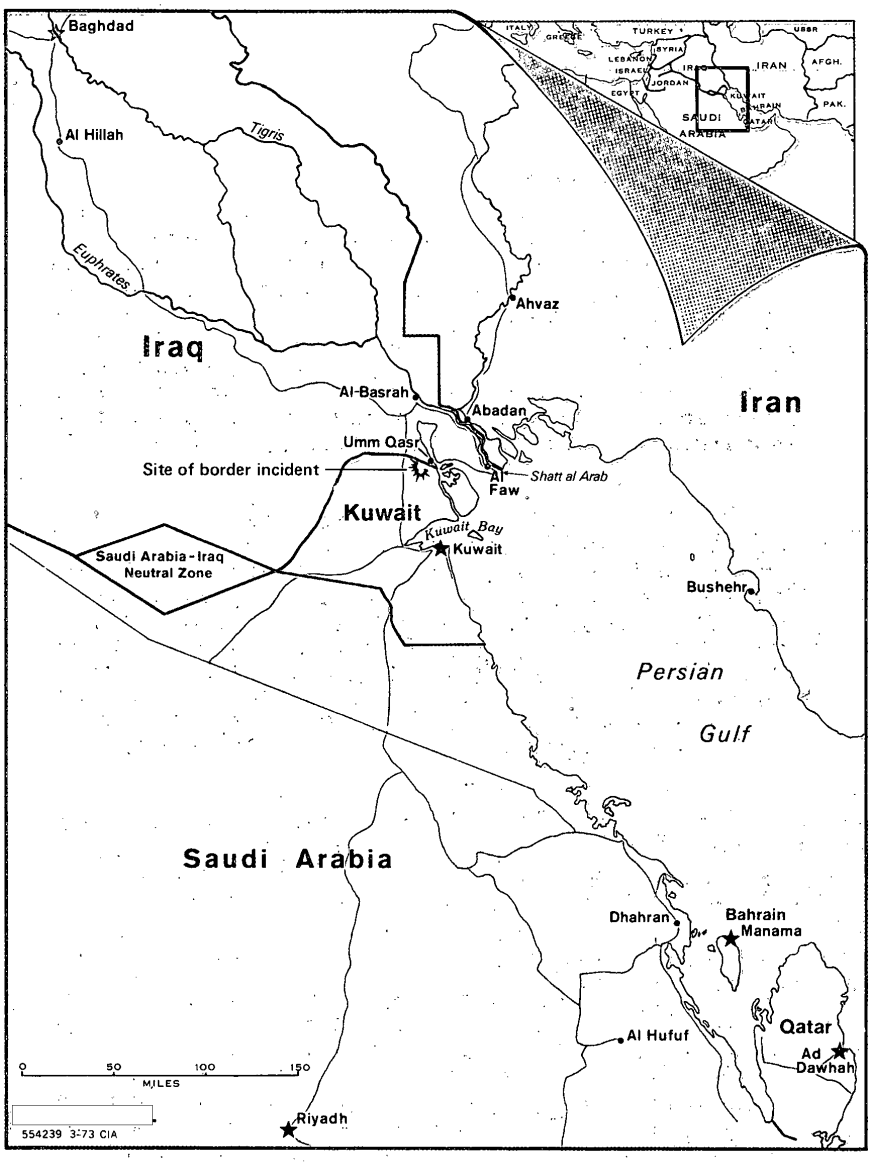

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NOTES

USSR-US: The US Embassy in Moscow has been informed by the Dutch that a large number of Jews from the Moscow area, perhaps as many as 150, are being permitted to emigrate to Israel without having to pay the education tax. Individuals in this group had received prior permission to leave the USSR, but could not do so because they could not pay the education tax. This represents a sharp turn in Soviet policy and is probably responsive to statements of US concern made by Secretary Shultz in Moscow last week.

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Iraq-Kuwait: Yesterday's Iraqi attack against a Kuwaiti police post apparently was provoked by Kuwait's recent reinforcement of the post, which is located in disputed territory and overlooks an Iraqi battery protecting the Umm Qasr naval base. Kuwait, with an army less than one-tenth the size of Iraq's, is in no position to retaliate. Baghdad seems unlikely to carry its action further in view of its more serious border dispute with Iran and continuing difficulties with its Kurdish minority.

Greece: Student unrest continues. Yesterday police stormed the Athens Law School when students took over the school-- authorities had denied them permission to hold an assembly. In view of Prime Minister Papadopoulos' warning earlier this month that protesters would be treated harshly and that martial law might be reimposed throughout the country, the issue is assuming mounting importance as a test of the government's resolve.

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